WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method for dynamically grouping clients in a

2   system, comprising:

3   storing data indicative of membership in a first

4   group at a client;

5   transmitting a group membership file including

6   information indicative of client memberships in two or more

7   groups at a system host; and

8   updating the data indicative of membership in the

9   first group at the client in response to receiving the

10   group membership file.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the data

2   indicative of membership in the first group comprises a

3   first group identifier.

1   3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2   creating the first group including two or more

3   member clients, a member client having a client identifier;

4   assigning the first group identifier to the first

5   group; and

6   associating the client identifiers of the member

7   clients with the first group identifier in the group

8   membership file.

1   4.   The method of claim 3, wherein the each member

2   client satisfies a criterion.

1   5.   The method of claim 4, wherein the criterion

2   comprises client profile information.

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1   6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   transmitting a message including a payload and a

3   second group identifier;

4   receiving the message at the client; and

5   extracting the payload from the message in

6   response to the first client identifier matching the second

7   client identifier.

1   7.   An article comprising:

2   a machine-readable medium which stores machine-

3   executable instructions, the instructions causing a machine

4   to:

5   store data indicative of membership in a first

6   group at a client;

7   transmit a group membership file including

8   information indicative of client memberships in two or more

9   groups at a system host; and

10   update the data indicative of membership in the

11   first group at the client in response to receiving the

12   group membership file.

1   8.   The article of claim 7, wherein the data

2   indicative of membership in the first group comprises a

3   first group identifier.

1   9.   The article of claim 8, further comprising

2   instructions causing the machine to:

3   create the first group including two or more

4   member clients, a member client having a client identifier;

5   assign the first group identifier to the first

6   group; and

7   associate the client identifiers of the member

8   clients with the first group identifier in the group

9   membership file.

1   10.   The article of claim 9, wherein the criterion

2   comprises client profile information.

1   11.   The article of claim 10, wherein the criterion

2   comprises client profile information.

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1   12.   The article of claim 7, further comprising

2   instructions causing the machine to:

3   transmit a message including a payload and a

4   second group identifier;

5   receive the message at the client; and

6   extract the payload from the message in response

7   to the first client identifier matching the second client

8   identifier.

1   13.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a memory operative to store an apparatus

3   identifier;

4   a receiver operative to receive a group

5   membership file in a first transmission, said file

6   including a group identifier and two or more associated

7   member identifiers; and

8   a receiver controller operative to store the

9   group identifier in the memory in response to said

10   apparatus identifier matching one of said member

11   identifiers.

1   14.   The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the group

2   membership file comprises two or more group identifiers, a

3   group identifier associated with two or more member

4   identifiers.

1   15.   The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the receiver

2   controller is operative to identify each group identifier

3   associated with a member identifier that matches the

4   apparatus identifier, and to update the memory to include

5   such identified group identifiers.

1   16.   The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said updating

2   comprises removing a stored group identifier in response to

3   said group identifier not being associated with the

4   apparatus identifier in the group membership file.

1   17.   The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the receiver

2   is operative to receive a message including an identifier

3   and a payload portion, and

4   wherein the receiver controller is operative to

5   compare said identifier to the apparatus identifier and the

6   stored group identifier and discard said message in

7   response to said identifier not matching one of said

8   apparatus identifier and said group identifier.

1   18.   A system host comprising:

2   a memory for storing a group membership file

3   including two or more group identifiers, a group identifier

4   associated with two or more member identifiers;

5   a group generator operative to create a first

6   group including two or more first group member identifiers

7   that share a first criterion and associate a group

8   identifier with the two or more first group membership

9   identifiers in the group membership file; and

10   a transmitter operative to transmit the group

11   member file to a plurality of client devices, two or more

12   of said client devices having client identifiers that match

13   the first group member identifiers.

1   19.   The system host of claim 18, further comprising:

2   a transmission controller operative to transmit

3   the group membership file to said plurality of client

4   devices at scheduled intervals.

1   20.   The system host of claim 19, wherein the group

2   generator is operative to update the group membership file

3   and transmit the updated group membership file to the

4   plurality of client devices.

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1   21.   A system comprising:

2   a system host comprising:

3   a memory for storing a group membership file

4   including two or more group identifiers, each

5   group identifier associated with two or more

6   member identifiers;

7   a group generator operative to create a

8   first group including two or more first group

9   member identifiers that share a first criterion

10   and associate a first group identifier with the

11   two or more first group membership identifiers in

12   the group membership file; and

13   a transmitter operative to transmit the

14   group member file; and

15   a plurality of clients, a client comprising:

16   a memory operative to store an apparatus

17   identifier;

18   a receiver operative to receive the group

19   membership file in a first transmission; and

20   a receiver controller operative to store a

21   group identifier in the memory in response to

22   said apparatus identifier matching one of said

23   member identifiers.

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1   22. The system of claim 21, wherein said

2   communication link comprises a transmission line.

1   23.   The system of claim 21, wherein said

2   communication link comprises a wireless communication link.

1   24.   The system of claim 21, wherein said client

2   devices comprise set-top appliances adapted for connection

3   to a television.

1   25.   The system of claim 21, wherein said client devices

2   comprise hand-held wireless communication devices.